

2021 INNOVATION FOCUS: EDUCATION CRISIS IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

Children across Central and South America have grown up with a broken educational system for years... and then a global pandemic and economic crisis hit. According to World Bank, 51% of children across Latin America were suffering “learning poverty” as a normal way of life before COVID-19.¹ This means that most children throughout the region were not able to read and understand a short, age-appropriate text by age 10. The rate of learning poverty was even more pronounced in countries like Guatemala (67%) and Honduras (75%).

The impacts of COVID-19 on education in places like Ecuador and Peru have been profound, where the virus is the leading cause of death.² At the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, over 95% of school-age children (ages 5-18) across Latin America were out of school.³ UNICEF has found that children in Latin America have lost 4X more school days (174 days on average) than in the rest of the world.⁴ Only one in two children in public schools is accessing quality distance learning. According to one Compassion International leader in the region, children have lost at least one year of education and possibly more. The impacts of this crisis are not only cognitive, they are social as well. Cristian, a 10-year-old from Guatemala said:

The television programs are very nice, but I also miss school," says Cristian, without taking his eyes off the sheets [worksheets]. "I talk on the phone with some of my friends, but I want to be with them, play ball at recess. I also miss the teachers and the classes that are missing on TV, such as science, English and art."⁵

These educational shocks are not just about today, they are about tomorrow. UNICEF predicts school-age children in Latin America will lose between US\$242 and US\$835 in annual earnings throughout their lifetimes due to disruptions in school and the economy.⁶

Something must be done. As people of faith, we must innovate, and we want your help to find the best solutions that will address this pressing need. Will you join us in finding solutions to this educational crisis for children?

Join us at: <https://www.baylor.edu/externalaffairs/compassion/>

Innovation Guidance:

- Solutions should work for low-income communities in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, or Bolivia.
- Innovations could apply to any of three educational settings: remote, remote/classroom hybrid, or physical classroom.
- Innovations should address the holistic nature of children: physical, socio-emotional, cognitive, and spiritual.
- Consider how innovations would fit in local economies and cultures to produce market-driven sustainability
- Provide special attention to educational access for children with disabilities, gender equity, and child safety.
- Solutions could be focused on any person in the educational system including teachers, parents, children, and support staff.
- Innovations may be high-tech, low-tech, or no-tech.

Go deeper to learn more:

- Compassion blog. “Kids in Poverty Adapt to the Strange New World of School at Home” <https://blog.compassion.com/kids-in-poverty-adapt-to-school-at-home/>
- UNICEF “Education on Hold” summary findings: <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/education-on-hold#fast>
- UNICEF “Education on Hold” full report: <https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/18746/file/Education-on-hold-web-0711-1.pdf>
- United Nations, Sustainable Development Goal 4: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>

¹ World Bank: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/costs-covid-19-education-latin-america-acting-now-protect-future-our-children>

² NPR: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/12/18/947792819/chart-covid-19-is-now-leading-killer-in-5-latin-american-nations>

³ UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/covid-19-more-95-cent-children-are-out-school-latin-america-and-caribbean>

⁴ UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/stories/hoping-get-back-classrooms>

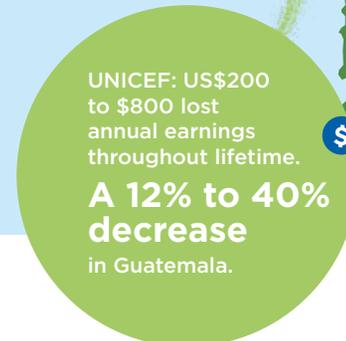
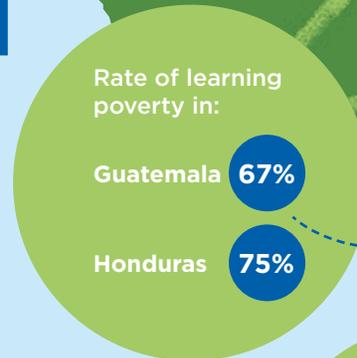
⁵ UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/covid-19-more-95-cent-children-are-out-school-latin-america-and-caribbean>

⁶ UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/18746/file/Education-on-hold-web-0711-1.pdf>

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APPLY NOW

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